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BROWNBACK STATEMENT ON LIBYA

WASHINGTON – As Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback today released the following statement as he chaired a hearing on ‘U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Libya.’ A portion of Brownback’s statement follows.

“We are here today to discuss the question of U.S. policy toward Libya,” Brownback said. “To be frank, I would have thought there would be little to say on the matter. After all, a trial began in the case of Pan Am 103 yesterday; as yet, there is no official decision on the question of who is responsible for the murder of 270 people, including 189 Americans. There is also a trial ongoing in Germany in the 1986 La Belle discotheque bombing, which killed two American servicemen. As with Pan Am 103, the government of Libya is suspected in the attack.

“Unfortunately, rather than the icy cold hostility I would have expected from the U.S. government toward Libya, I have perceived a slow warming. A couple of months ago, there was a mission from the Department of State to Libya to see if the travel ban should be lifted. Now, perhaps the legal basis for the travel ban no longer exists – I can’t say. But I can say one thing for sure: Nothing has changed in the last year that would justify sending this message other than a change of heart in Washington. Qadhafi is the same dictator he ever was.

“Why would the Clinton Administration want to send any signal to the Qadhafi regime that we are in any way satisfied with its conduct? Qadhafi has expressed no regret for the death of 270 men, women and children. He has taken no responsibility. To the contrary, he has made comments indicating that he believes the world is coming around to see his position.

“It is true, the Clinton Administration has not gone as far as many European governments – who seem unfazed by terrorists murdering scores of their citizens. On the other hand, I am very concerned there is a lack of commitment to finding and punishing the murderers of this world.

“Indeed, though Secretary of State Albright has gone out of her way to assure us that it is not the case, I have some suspicion that the Secretary General of the United Nations may well have told Colonel Qadhafi that he need not fear from this trial in the Netherlands; it will not destabilize his government. If that is not the case, why will the Secretary General and the Secretary of State not release the contents of Mr. Annan’s letter to Col. Qadhafi cajoling him into cooperating in the trial now taking place? And how, I wonder, could a finding that the government of Libya planned and ordered its operatives to execute the downing of Pan Am 103 do anything but destabilize the Qadhafi regime?

“The more I think about this issue, the more troubled I am. We are not talking in the abstract. We are talking about the wanton murder of men, women, little children and babies. Think of them – think of their families. 189 American families deserve for their government to be relentless in hunting down the terrorists who so horribly killed their loved ones,” Brownback said.